

# Kids Talk

## OUR MISSION

Kids Talk is a nonprofit child advocacy center operated by Aspire Indiana Health in Madison County to help protect children from abuse and neglect. It has recently added elders, vulnerable adults and victims of sex trafficking to its mission.

Kids Talk provides a child-friendly location where children can report sexual or physical abuse, neglect or their memory of a harmful incident in a safe and comforting environment. Kids Talk uses a multi-disciplinary approach in collaboration with state and local agencies to serve and protect the children of Madison County, including law enforcement, Indiana Department of

Child Services, prosecutors, mental and medical healthcare providers and trained advocates.

**All Kids Talk services are provided free** with absolutely no cost to those we serve.

Kids Talk also operates a prevention program for Madison County students K-12 that educates them on body safety and digital media safety.

## THE CHALLENGE

Abuse, neglect, sexual abuse — these are horrific crimes that are



extremely personal in nature and difficult for victims to discuss. Like adults, our vulnerable child victims experience shame, fear, guilt and embarrassment and can be reluctant to participate in the investigative process. Getting children to overcome their fear and shame to

trust an adult enough and share their experience can be difficult. But talking about it is the first step to providing safety and healing.

According to the Kids Count Data Center, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Indiana Youth Institute, Madison County has among the highest rate of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect per capita in Indiana.

In 2017 there were 1,189 substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect in Madison County and Kids Talk served 742 children. Clearly, child abuse intervention needs to be a priority in our community.

## A MODEL FOR SUCCESS

Kids Talk is based on the child advocacy center model. At its core, the model is about teamwork – bringing agency professionals involved in a case together on the front end of a case. It's about putting the needs of the victim or child first.

## WE DO THIS BY:

- Providing a safe and welcoming place for children and adults to be heard
- Bringing the system to potential victims, by providing a single location for forensic interviews rather than having them endure multiple interviews by various agencies
- Utilizing a certified forensic interviewer who can meet the informational needs of all investigative professionals involved while remaining victim-focused
- Facilitating a collaborative approach among agency investigative professionals that results in effective, efficient and victim-centered casework
- Ensuring that victims, and parents or caregivers of the children are guided towards programs that will facilitate the healing process for the child and family

## VICTIM ADVOCACY

Children and families along with vulnerable adult victims need support in navigating the various legal and support systems they encounter which may be unfamiliar to them. Crisis intervention, assessment and support services help to assess their needs; reduce fear and anxiety; and expedite access to appropriate services.

Kids Talk has on-staff Victim Advocates who work with the child and non-offending caregiver from the

time their appointment is scheduled until they feel no additional follow up is needed.

## For more information on victim advocacy, please contact:

Becky Oldham, Victim Advocate  
(765) 641-8202

[becky.oldham@aspireindiana.org](mailto:becky.oldham@aspireindiana.org)

## EXPANDED SUPPORT

Forensic interviewers are specially trained to provide legally defensible interviews with non-verbal adults and teens to ensure that their voices are heard.

Kids Talk staff are also in training to assist with the spectre of child and adult sex trafficking that is known to operate in or travel through Indiana.

## HEALTHCARE REFERRALS

As part of Aspire Indiana Health, a nonprofit provider of comprehensive healthcare services, Kids Talk is able to provide quick and easy referrals to families in need of medical or behavioral healthcare, as well as support programs addressing the social determinants of health such as housing, employment and legal aid.

Aspire has multiple clinic locations, including Anderson, Elwood and Fairmount, and also offers telehealth services through Video in Person (ViP) appointments. It is credentialed as a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and as an Indiana Community Mental Health Center (CMHC).

Aspire accepts Medicare and Medicaid as well as most forms of traditional insurance, and has sliding-scale fees for those lacking insurance.

## For More Information:

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